

# **LUMBER RIVER STATE PARK PARK PROFILE**

## **PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT**

In response to local interest expressed by government units, non-profit organizations and individuals, the 1989 General Assembly authorized the Lumber River State Park and State River. The General Assembly action followed a study of the river and its corridor, public meetings and hearings and a qualification and feasibility report on the Lumber River made to the governor and General Assembly. The report recommended adding the Lumber River to the state parks system because the river was an outstanding resource worthy of inclusion, strong local support for such action existed and the addition of a blackwater river was consistent with and addressed a need identified in the Systemwide Plan. The Lumber River legislation called for development of a plan to "...recognize and provide for State and local government protection of the various parts of the river so as to preserve its outstanding character in perpetuity".

The Lumber River's significant biological resources include the natural communities of the river, floodplains and uplands. The floodplain of the river contains extensive examples of the bottomland, swamp and sandbar communities typical of blackwater rivers, as well as the aquatic communities of the river channel and backwaters. Unusual upland communities include the extremely dry, barren sand hills on relict sand dune deposits at several places along the floodplain. The rare sarvis holly (*Ilex amelanchar*) is scattered along much of the river. Other rare species include woody goldenrod (*Chrysoma pauciflosculosa*), Carolina bogmint (*Macbridea caroliniana*) and alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*), as well as several species of fish and marine fossils. Animal life along the river is abundant and varied.

The 115-mile-long, free-flowing Lumber River offers a variety of scenic resources as it meanders through North Carolina's Coastal Plain region. Outstanding scenic views, including bottomland hardwoods, cypress-gum swamps and upland pine forests exist along the river's extensive undeveloped corridor. The water reflects the beautiful and peaceful shoreline and swamps. Light and dark contrast as sunlight filters through the dense forest canopy and dances on the tea-colored water. Swamplands are broken occasionally by higher ground landings and modern construction, particularly on the natural river segments.

The significant recreational resources include the extensive length of the river corridor, opportunities for water-based recreation, the corridor's natural character and upland areas suitable for state park development. Recreational activities, such as hiking, nature study, fishing, canoeing, camping and picnicking are compatible with protection of the park's outstanding natural resources and the river's designation as a State River. The Lumber River offers high quality fishing and small-craft boating and canoeing in an uncrowded setting. The river's value as a canoe trail was recognized in 1978 when the upper Lumber River was designated as North Carolina's first recreational water trail and in 1981 with its designation as a national canoe trail. In 1984, the lower Lumber River was designated as a state canoe trail. Visitors are able to experience the natural setting during multi-day canoe trips. Interpretive themes focus on the natural resources of the river and surrounding Natural Heritage Priority Areas as well as on Native American culture.

The Lumber River illustrates the geomorphic processes and landforms typical of blackwater rivers, including meanders, sandy point bars, low natural levees, sloughs and backwaters formed by abandoned channels. It contains several examples of aeolian sand deposits, commonly associated with large rivers farther south but uncommon in North Carolina. A few outcrops along the river expose Coastal Plain formations and abundant marine fossils.

Pottery, tools, arrowheads and other archaeological artifacts indicate that the limited high ground adjacent to the river has been in continuous use since prehistoric times. While there is potential for additional discoveries, such continuous use makes the discovery of significant undisturbed archaeological sites unlikely. Cultural features including relict bridge abutments, tram bridges, dock pilings and canals attest to the importance of the lumber and naval stores industries in the early development of the region.

The Lumber River Natural and Scenic River and the Lumber River State Park exist to preserve the beauty of the river and to protect its water quality and adjacent lands by retaining natural and scenic conditions. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving its biological, scenic, recreational, geological and archaeological resources and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of this natural heritage.

### PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

**Lumber River Ecology:** This theme focuses on the natural communities and water quality of this significant river basin.

**Water Recreation:** This theme focuses on the significant recreation opportunities along this 115-mile corridor. Special emphasis is placed on aquatic safety and stewardship.

### STATISTICS

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Visitation (1999)           | 37,739     |
| Operating Budget (FY 98-99) | \$ 252,957 |
| Revenue (FY 98-99)          | \$ 1,193   |

### VISITOR FACILITIES

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Primitive camping (9 sites)                | Primitive group camping (1 site) |
| Canoe-in camping (5 sites along the river) | Picnic area and shelter          |
| Drinking water                             | Hiking trail (0.8 mile)          |
| River fishing                              | Fishing pier                     |
| Boat access                                | Restrooms                        |

### CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION NEEDS

- |   |  |              |
|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | The <b>Pea Ridge development</b> project (land dependent) includes road improvements, a main gate, seeding and landscaping, 2 boat launches with parking, dumpstation, electric and water line extension, a well, 3 group camps with washhouse, 40-site tent and trailer campground with hookups, maintenance area, picnic area, renovation of residences and demolition of some existing buildings. | \$ 5,020,240 |
| 2 | The <b>visitor center at Pea Ridge</b> project (land dependent) will construct a visitor center with furniture, equipment and exhibits and a second tent and trailer campground loop.  | 3,170,251    |

|               |  |                     |
|---------------|--|---------------------|
| 3             | The <b>Chalk Banks development</b> project (land dependent) includes a boat launch, gate, main road, parking, utility services, canoe camp, family picnic area, group picnic area, maintenance area, 2 residences, tent and trailer campground and a visitor center with exhibits. | 5,375,682           |
| 4             | The <b>Piney Island development</b> project includes development of 10 campsites, a pit privy or mulching toilet, road improvements and trail development with signs.  | 372,734             |
| 5             | The <b>Fairbluff canoe access area</b> project (land dependent) calls for development of the last takeout before the NC-SC state line with a gate, 15-car parking, canoe launch improvements and an interpretive display.  | 56,666              |
| <b>TOTAL:</b> |  | <hr/> \$ 13,995,573 |

### DEDICATED NATURE PRESERVE

**Lumber River Dedicated Nature Preserve:** In July 1995, 1340 acres of Lumber River State Park were approved by the Governor and Council of State for designation as a Dedicated Nature Preserve.

**The Preserve contains three significant sites:** The Net Hole, Piney Island and Buck Landing. Together they represent a combination of extensive intact floodplain communities and rare plant communities. The communities include Cypress-Gum Swamp, Coastal Plain Levee Forest, Coastal Plain Bottomland Hardwoods and Sand and Mud Bar. Rare plants are Carolina bogmint (Macbridea caroliniana) and sarvis holly (Ilex amelanchier). The upland community of Piney Island is a very distinct and possibly unique community dominated by evergreen species, including sand laurel oak (Quercus hemisphaerica) and wild olive (Osmanthus americanus), normally confined in North Carolina to within a few miles of the coast.

### FUTURE LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the Lumber River State Park master plan will require the acquisition of 7,846 acres. Acquisition priorities include acreage for the development of permanent park facilities at Chalk Banks and Pea Ridge and acquisition of several high quality natural areas in order to protect rare species, water quality and scenic values.

|                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Master Plan Total Acreage | 12,709 acres       |
| Current Park Acreage      | <u>4,833 acres</u> |
| <b>Acquisition Needs</b>  | <b>7,876 acres</b> |

### 1999 STAFF POSITIONS

| Permanent               |   | Seasonal               |   | Peak Load              |   |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Park Superintendent I   | 1 | Park Attendant         | 2 | General Utility Worker | 1 |
| Park Ranger II          | 1 | General Utility Worker | 1 |                        |   |
| Park Ranger I           | 3 |                        |   |                        |   |
| Maintenance Mechanic II | 1 |                        |   |                        |   |
| Maintenance Mechanic I  | 1 |                        |   |                        |   |
| Office Assistant III    | 1 |                        |   |                        |   |

### PROPOSED STAFF ADDITIONS

| Permanent |  | Seasonal |  | Peak Load |  |
|-----------|--|----------|--|-----------|--|
|           |  |          |  |           |  |